



# Five Works of Jacqueline Woodson: A Social-Emotional Learning Journey

## Social Awareness Teaching Guide

*Harbor Me*  
pp. 63-64

### Learning Objectives

These learning objectives align with the CASEL framework and cultivate social-emotional learning skills.

Students will be able to understand how to:

- Take another's perspective
- Show concern for the feelings of others
- Identify diverse social norms, including unjust ones
- Understand the influences of organizations/systems on behavior

### Essential questions

1. Why do we have social rules and norms?
2. What is one social rule or norm you wish you could change?

### Reflection questions

#### Before Questions

- What are the differences between rules and norms?
- What are some rules and norms you are expected to follow?
- Are the rules the same everywhere you go?
- How do these rules impact your behavior?

#### During Questions

- Why is it that acceptable behaviors change as we get older?
- Why does Amari think it's not okay for him to hug Esteban even though he thinks Red can?
- What is something you did as a little kid that you can't do now that you are older?

#### After Questions

- Who makes rules and norms like boys don't hug? Why do you think this norm ever came about?
- What if Amari hugged Esteban? How might others react? How might Esteban feel?
- How would you describe Amari's emotional state? Is he sad? Mad? How do you know? How are you feeling after reading this excerpt?



### Writing prompts

- Write about a rule that changed now that you are older. What is the rule? How did the rule change impact your behavior? How do you feel about it?
- If you could change one rule, what would it be? How would people's behavior change if the rule changed?
- Pretend you are Amari. Write a letter to Amari's dad telling him how he feels about the rules changing so quickly.

### Educator Tips: Going Deeper

- Have students make a list of rules for different places that they visit (e.g., school, church, home, sporting events). Have students look for places where these rules overlap and where they diverge. Have students talk about how they navigate these different rules and how they adjust their behaviors because of these different rules. Students can discuss which rules are easiest for them to follow and which ones are more difficult. Why are some rules necessary and some controversial?
- According to Amari, boys don't hug each other. This lack of tolerance around physical affection makes it difficult for Amari to show care and comfort to his friend. Have students talk about where this rule comes from. How does telling boys they can't hug impact their social and emotional well-being? What other rules are there that pertain to how boys interact with each other? Are these rules the same in other cultures? Have students write a scene where Amari has a conversation with his dad about these rules. What does Amari say and how does his dad respond?
- Have students research the benefits of hugging. Lead students in a discussion of the social, emotional, and physical benefits of hugs. What surprised them? How does this new information help them to understand Amari's need for hugs differently? How will this information help them to act differently? Also, think about consent and what it means to ask for a hug and to receive a hug that is uninvited. How might students express their boundaries with others? What might they do if they are uncomfortable with a hug as physical contact? What else might they do to receive some sort of comfort and care that feels okay to them?